3: Hiscocks G-4, 5 (1946-1949) 1953 EK1 Austria EK1

Socialism and German Imperialism. Most of the *Volksdeutsche* are not only of German stock but come from the Succession States, and therefore have traditional cultural links with Austria. If the Second Austrian Republic provides them with the homes they want and masters the main difficulties with which it is faced, they may yield willingly to its catalytic influence.

A most serious tendency that has become apparent in Austria since the War has been the steady transference of population from the country to the towns—the so-called flight from the land. Not only did the number of insured agricultural workers drop by over 68,000 between 1937 and 1951. In June 1952 the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry pointed out that during 1950 on an average two farmers, five farmers' children, and sixteen labourers left their farms every day to seek work in the towns or in other branches of the economy. This indicated that the general trend was affecting the farmers and their families, as well as the paid workers. Moreover, the drop in the number of labourers would have been far worse had not over 60,000 refugees and displaced persons sought work on the land.

The significance of the tendency can only be appreciated in relation to the economic position of Austria as a whole. Even a highly industrialized State like England, with a record of great success in the past, is being compelled by world conditions to force up its food production. Austria has not the resources necessary to concentrate on industry, and in present circumstances cannot afford to allow any branch of its production to fall below its proved capacity. The loss of man-power can in some measure be counteracted still further by mechanization, but the possibilities in this direction are strictly limited in a country where the farms are small and the countryside mountainous.

Migration to the towns is a world phenomenon, and some of the causes of it are common to the many countries concerned: the glamour of city life, the more regular working hours, and above all the greater social opportunities that a

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town offers. But there were a number of special reasons to which the post-War trend in Austria can be attributed. The comparative neglect of Austrian agriculture by the Nazis and the discriminatory nature of Austrian social legislation, before the Law of 1948 was passed, have already been mentioned. In addition, the accommodation provided for agricultural labourers was most unsatisfactory. On the majority of farms there were no dwellings at all for married workers, and the rooms provided for single men were frequently quite inadequate. Agricultural wages lagged far behind those paid in industry. At the end of 1948 they varied between 127 and 203 per cent above the 1945 level, while the wages of an unskilled industrial worker had risen 350 per cent. It is true that the farm worker had virtually no food problems and also received payments in kind, but the comparison with industry was a natural cause of discontent. Furthermore, the boom in building and construction work due to war damage and the large undertakings financed by ERP funds provided attractive opportunities of alternative employment, often near enough to agricultural areas to attract the labourers' notice.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry realized the danger of the situation and evolved, somewhat tardily, a comprehensive programme to deal with it. The new Minister, Herr Thoma, who took office in January 1952, brought fresh energy to his department and issued a forceful memorandum on the subject the following summer.

The first important step taken was the Agricultural Labourers' Law of 1948. It did a great deal to raise morale and, by strengthening the workers' organization, ensured that their point of view would be heard. The establishment of Agricultural Workers' Chambers in most provinces contributed to the same result. The price increases for agricultural products approved by the Fourth and Fifth Price–Wage Agreements also improved the general situation.

Between 1947 and 1951 Government and ERP subsidies amounting to 55 million schillings were spent on agricultural housing, and 10,371 dwellings were completed, including

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3,013 married quarters. During the summer of 1952 further legislation was under consideration dealing with accommodation and technical training for agricultural workers.

The Ministry[1] also worked on a number of schemes in conjunction with the provinces and the Ministry of Social Welfare for helping displaced persons to settle on farms, inducing unemployed to work on the land, and persuading town-bred youths to give agriculture a trial.

As a result of all these efforts the flight from the land has been checked, though not stopped. Between November 1951 and November 1952 the number employed in agriculture and forestry fell by 6,500 compared with 9,400 the previous year. The fact that during the winter of 1952–3 there was a certain amount of unemployment on the land, due largely to increased mechanization, does not mean that the problem has ceased to be serious. Until agricultural production has at least regained the pre-War level, any further reduction in the number employed must remain a cause of great concern. It is a national problem which, like the drive to increase productivity, requires co-ordinated effort and a programme of public education for its solution.

A less obvious but no less dangerous trend in Austrian society since the War has been the progressive deterioration of the economic position of certain sections of the community, limited in number, but of value and importance to the nation out of all proportion to their numerical strength. The categories in question are university professors, school teachers, the administrative ranks of the civil service, and certain highly qualified groups in industry and the professions. They differ widely from one another, but there are certain common causes of their depressed condition.

The different categories belong, on the whole, to the so-called middle class, with its tradition of thrift and careful conservation of possessions and its deep-seated reluctance to take part in any organized public complaint about its condition. Such private property as they or their families possessed, including personal articles of value, had very largely disappeared

[1] [i.e. the ministry of Agriculture and Forestry - Analyst]

October 20th, 1926. Seipel's fourth term of office as Chancellor.
November 3rd, 1926. The "Linz Programme" of the Social-Democratic Party.
July 14th, 1927. Verdict of "Not Guilty" in the Schattendorf Trial.
July 15th to 17th, 1927. Serious disorders in Vienna. Burning of the Palace of Justice.
March 11th, 1928. First demonstration of the Heimwehr in an industrial area.
October 8th, 1929. Simultaneous demonstrations of the Heimwehr and the Republican Schutzbund in Wiener Neustadt, separated by a cordon of the Austrian Army.
September 16th, 1929. Failure of the Bodencreditanstalt.
October 27th, 1929. First demonstration of the Heimwehr in Vienna.
December 7th to 10th, 1929. Austrian Constitution changed.
May 18th, 1930. "Korneuburg Oath" of the Heimwehr.
November 9th, 1930. Last parliamentary elections before the Second World War.
May 12th, 1931. Government action to save the Creditanstalt.
September 12th to 13th, 1931. Attempted Putsch by the Styrian Heimatschutz.
May 20th, 1932. First Dollfuss Government.
September 5th to 20th, 1932. Conference in Stresa.
March 4th, 1933. Resignation of the three Presidents of Parliament. Crisis for democracy.
March 7th, 1933. Prohibition of all public meetings. The freedom of the press curtailed.
March 18th, 1933. The German Cabinet Minister Frank threatens Austria on behalf of the Nazis.
March 30th, 1933. Republican Schutzbund disbanded.
May 1st, 1933. The Socialist May-Day celebrations forbidden.

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In the meantime history had taken its inevitable course. The black and yellow flag had been hauled down in Austria and a disinherited generation hoisted the red-white-red tricolour over the ruins of the Hapsburg Empire. While in Vienna the Republic was proclaimed on the 12th of November, 1918, and the principle established that in future all power would emanate from the people, the Succession States—Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Yougoslavia—had hastened to invoke the principle of self-determination in order to declare their independence, and thus to burden the remaining rump of Austria with all debts and obligations.

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To this country of barely seven million inhabitants, whose frontiers had been torn up by violence, the remnants of the army now came streaming back—officers from garrisons in Hungary and Croatia, administrative clerks from Cracow and Laibach, ship-builders from the docks of Pola and Trieste, merchants from Belgrade and the harbours of the Adriatic, teachers and doctors from the Ukraine and the Carpathians, professors from the German University in Prague, mining engineers from the Upper Silesian collieries, governors' staffs and employees from the vast forest districts, judges, diplomats, ambassadors, builders, foremen, railwaymen—all streamed back into the mutilated torso of what only four years previously had been a prosperous empire.

The fate which now overtook Austria was without precedent. The worst horror of those days was not the stormy happenings all around and the starvation, but the utterly catastrophic reversal of every aspect of life, and the disappearance of Austria's proud position. An Austrian nocturno had begun, the privileges of centuries had been extinguished.